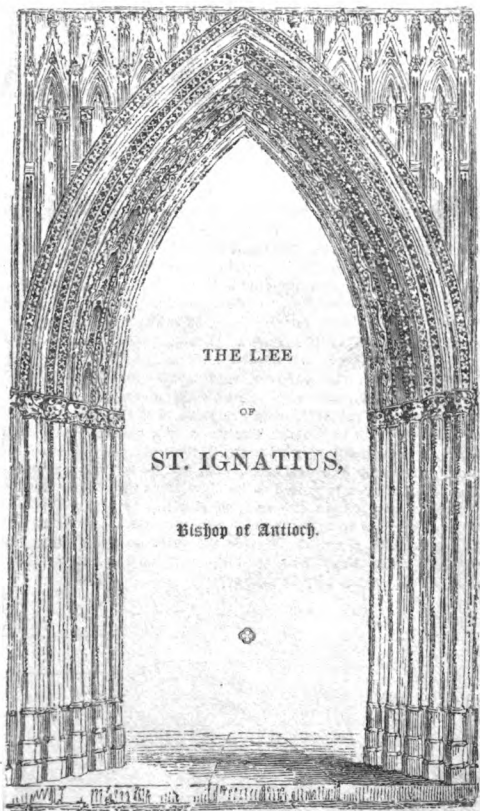

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THE LIEE
OF
ST. IGNATIUS,
Bishop of Antioch.

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[ANTIOCH in its present state is in all respects a poor and degraded place. In ancient times, it was the seat of the Syrian Government, both under the Macedonians and the Romans, and was long esteemed one of the most powerful cities of the East. In the time of our Lord it was supposed to be the third city of the Roman provinces. Subsequently, it came under the yoke of various conquerors; and, at last, in the thirteenth century, it was subjected to the dominion of the Turks. Besides the ravages of war, Antioch has suffered, in common with many other eastern cities, by earthquakes; the latest—a very terrible one—was in 1822 which threw down numerous houses, walls, and mosques, and filled the streets with ruins. But few remains of the ancient grandeur of the city are to be found. The ruins of a castle, however, still remain; and on one side of the hill, the walls may also be seen, which are strong and well built, with square towers at intervals. The population is supposed to be about four thousand. The few Christians who remain, it is said, worship in a cave in the side of a hill, a little way from the town, where the priests administer the Eucharist, and chant the service according to the ritual of the Greek Church. Such, alas, is the now fallen state of Antioch—once the city of the holy Ignatius!]





Life of St. Ignatius.¹



INDING nothing recorded concerning the country or parentage of this holy man, I shall not build upon mere fancy and conjecture. He is ordinarily styled, both by himself and others, Theophorus ; which, though, like Justus, it be oft no more than a common epithet, yet is it sometimes used as a proper name. It is written in two ways, according to the different nations : in the one it denotes a divine person, a man whose soul is full of God, and all holy and divine qualities, as Ignatius himself is said to have explained it ; in the other it implies one that is borne, or carried, by God. And in this latter sense he is said to have derived the title, from our Lord's taking him up into his arms. For thus we are told, that he was that very child whom our Saviour took into his arms, and set in the midst of his disciples, as the most lively instance of innocency and humility.¹ And this is affirmed (if number might carry it) not only by the Greeks in the public rituals ;

¹ From CAVE.

² Mark ix. 36 ; Matt. xviii. 2—4.

by Metaphrastes, Nicephorus, and others; but (as Archbishop Usher observes, from the manuscripts in his own possession) by two Syriac writers, more ancient than they. But how confidently or generally soever it be reported, the story at best is precarious and uncertain. St. Chrysostom (who had far better opportunities of knowing than they) expressly affirms of Ignatius, that he never saw our Saviour, or enjoyed any familiarity or converse with him.

In his younger years, he was brought up under apostolical institution: so Chrysostom tells us, that he was intimately conversant with the apostles, educated and nursed up by them, everywhere at hand, and made partaker, both of their familiar discourses, and more secret and uncommon mysteries. Which, though it is probable he means of his particular conversation with St. Peter and Paul; yet some of the forementioned authors, and not they only, but the acts of his martyrdom, written as is supposed by some present at it, further assure us, that he was St. John's disciple. Being fully instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, he was, for his eminent parts, and the great piety of his life, chosen to be bishop of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, and the most famous and renowned city of the east; not more remarkable among foreign writers for being the oriental seat of the Roman emperors, and their viceroys and governors, than it is in ecclesiastics,

for its eminent entertainment of the Christian faith, its giving the venerable title of Christians to the disciples of the holy Jesus, and St. Peter's first and peculiar residence in this place. Whence the synod of Constantinople, assembled under Nectarius, in their synodical epistle to the western bishops, deservedly call it "the most ancient and truly apostolic church of Antioch, in which the honourable name of Christians did first commence."¹ In all which respects it is frequently in the writings of the church, by a proud kind of title, styled, *Θεούπολις*, or the City of god. That Ignatius was constituted bishop of this church is allowed on all hands. I shall not need to prove what is evident enough in itself, and plainly acknowledged by the ancients; that St. Peter and St. Paul planted Christianity in this city, and both concurred to the foundation of this church; the one applying himself to the Jews, the other to the Gentiles. And large enough was the vineyard to admit the joint endeavours of these two great planters of the gospel; it being a vast populous city, containing at that time, according to St. Chrysostom's computation, no less than two hundred thousand souls. But the apostles (who could not stay always in one place) being called off to the ministry of other churches, saw it necessary to substitute others

¹ Acts xi. 26.

in their room ; the one resigning his trust to Euodius, the other to Ignatius. Hence, in the Apostolic Constitutions, Euodius is said to be ordained bishop of Antioch by St. Peter, and Ignatius by St. Paul ; till Euodius dying, and the Jewish converts being better reconciled to the Gentiles, Ignatius succeeded in the sole care and presidency over that church, wherein he might possibly be afterwards confirmed by Peter himself. In which respect probably the author of the Alexandrine Chronicon meant it, when he affirms, that Ignatius was constituted bishop of Antioch by the apostles. By this means he may be said both immediately to succeed the apostle, as Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Chrysostom affirm ; and withal to be the next after Euodius, as St. Jerome, Socrates, Metaphrastes, and others place him. However, Euodius dying, and he being settled in it by the apostles' hands, might be justly said to succeed St. Peter ; in which sense it is, that some of the ancients expressly affirm him to have received his consecration from St. Peter.

Somewhat above forty years St. Ignatius continued in his charge at Antioch, in the midst of very stormy and tempestuous times. But he, like a wise and prudent pilot, sat at the stern, and declined the dangers that threatened them, by his prayers and tears, his fastings, and the constancy of his

preaching, and those indefatigable pains he took among them, fearing lest any of the more weak and unsettled Christians might be overborne with the storms of persecution. Never did a little calm and quiet interval happen, but he rejoiced in the prosperity of the church : though, as to himself, he somewhat impatiently expected and longed for martyrdom, without which he accounted he could never perfectly attain to the love of Christ, nor fill up the duty and measures of a true disciple ; which accordingly afterwards became his portion. Indeed, as to the particular acts of his government, nothing memorable is recorded of him in the antiquities of the church, more than what Socrates relates, (by what authority, however, I know not,) that he saw a vision, wherein he heard the angels, with alternate hymns, celebrating the honour of the Holy Trinity, in imitation whereof he instituted the way of antiphonal hymns in the church of Antioch ; which thence spread itself over the whole Christian church.

It was about the year of Christ 107, when Trajan, the emperor, swelled with his late victory over the Scythians and the Daci, about the ninth year of his reign, came to Antioch, to make preparation for the war which he was resolved to make upon the Parthians and Armenians. He entered the city with the pomps and solemnities of a triumph ; and as his first care usually was about the con-

cernments of religion, he began presently to inquire into that affair. Indeed he looked upon it as an affront to his other victories to be conquered by Christians; and therefore had already commenced a persecution against them in other parts of the empire, which he resolved to carry on here. St. Ignatius (whose solicitude for the good of his flock made him continually stand upon his guard) thinking it more prudent to go himself than stay to be sent for, of his own accord presented himself to the emperor. When brought into the imperial presence, he was thus addressed by Trajan:—"Who art thou," he said, "and what evil spirit is exercising its malice upon thee, that thou hast thus adventured to transgress the commands which I have given, and even to exercise such persuasions upon others, as has brought them to a miserable end?" Ignatius answered, "I bear the title of Theophorus; evil spirits cannot influence the acts of those who bear that name; the servants of God are protected from the reproach of demons. But if, in supposing the malice of such beings towards me, you imply my hostility against them, I admit that you are not mistaken; for I am the subject of a Heavenly King, whose name is Christ; and by His help I bring to nought the counsels of the evil spirits." "What signifieth the title Theophorus?" inquired Trajan; "to whom belongs it?" "It

belongs," replied Ignatius, "to all who carry Jesus Christ in their bosoms." "Then," said Trajan, "do you think that we have not our gods in our minds, when we employ them to fight with us against our enemies?" Ignatius answered him, "You do wrong to designate as gods the demons whom the heathen worship. There is one God, who made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them; and there is one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, of whose kingdom I am an expectant." "Do you mean," inquired Trajan, "that person who was crucified in the time of Pontius Pilate?" "Him," replied Ignatius, "I mean, who nailed upon His cross both the sins which I have committed, and the being that led me to commit them, and who has decreed that all spiritual craft and malice shall be put under the feet of them who carry Him in their bosoms!" "Do you then," asked Trajan, "carry a crucified man within you?" Ignatius answered, "I do; for it is written, 'I will dwell within them, and I will walk among them.'" The issue was, that the holy man was cast into prison; where (if what the Greek rituals and some others report, be true) he was, for the constancy and resolution of his profession, subjected to the most severe and merciless torments, whipped with scourges with leaden bullets at the end of them, forced to hold fire

in his hands, while his sides were burnt with paper dipped in oil, his feet stood upon live coals, and his flesh was torn off with burning pincers. Having, by an invincible patience, overcome the malice and cruelty of his tormentors, the emperor pronounced the final sentence upon him, that being incurably overrun with superstition, he should be carried bound by soldiers to Rome, and there thrown as a prey to wild beasts. The good man heartily rejoiced at the fatal decree: "I thank thee, O Lord," said he, "that thou hast condescended thus perfectly to honour me with thy love, and hast thought me worthy, with thy apostle Paul, to be bound with iron chains." With that he cheerfully embraced his chains, and having fervently prayed for his church, and with tears recommended it to the divine care and providence, he delivered up himself into the hands of his keepers, that were appointed to transport him to the place of execution.

It may justly seem strange, and it was that which puzzled the great Scaliger, why he should be sent so vast a way, from Antioch in Syria, to be martyred at Rome. Whereof these probable accounts may be rendered. First, it was usual with the governors of provinces, where the malefactors were more than ordinarily eminent, either for the quality of their persons, or the nature of their crimes, to send them to Rome, that

their punishment might be made exemplary in the eye of the world. Secondly, his enemies were not willing he should suffer at home, where he was too much honoured and esteemed already, and where his death would but raise him into a higher veneration with the people, and settle their minds in a firmer belief of that faith which he had taught them, and which they then saw him sealing with his blood. Thirdly, by so long a journey, they hoped that in all places where he came, men would be more effectually terrified from the embracing that religion, which they saw so much disliked and resented by the emperor, and the profession whereof could not be purchased but at so dear a rate; besides the probability, that by this usage the constancy of Ignatius himself might be broken, and he forced to yield. Fourthly, they designed to make the good man's punishment as severe and heavy as they could; and therefore so contrived it, that there might be a concurrence of circumstances to render it bitter and grievous to him. His great age, being then probably above fourscore years old, the vast length and tediousness of the journey, which was not a little increased by their going the furthest way about, (for they went not the direct passage to Rome, but by infinite windings, diverted from place to place,) the trouble and difficulty of the passage, bad at all times, but much worse

now in winter, the want of all necessary conveniences and accommodations for so aged and infirm a person, the rude and merciless usage of his keepers, who treated him with all ruggedness and inhumanity : “ From Syria even to Rome, both by sea and land, I fight with beasts : night and day I am chained to ten leopards, (which is my military guard,) who, the kinder I am to them, are the more cruel and fierce to me,” as himself complains. Besides, what was dearer to him than all this, his credit and reputation might be in danger to suffer with him ; seeing, at so great a distance, the Romans were generally more likely to understand him to suffer as a malefactor for some notorious crime, than as a martyr for religion ; and this Metaphrastes assures us, was one particular end of his being sent thither. Not to say that beyond all this, the Divine providence (which knows how to bring good out of evil, and to overrule the designs of bad men to wise and excellent purposes) might the rather permit it to be so, that the leading so great a man so far in triumph, might make the faith more remarkable and illustrious, that he might have the better opportunity to establish and confirm the Christians, who flocked to him from all parts, as he came along ; and by giving them the example of a generous virtue, arm them with the stronger resolution to die for their religion, and especially that he might

seal the truth of his religion at Rome, where his death might be (as Chrysostom speaks) "a tutor of piety," and teach the city, that was so famous for arts and wisdom, a new and better philosophy than they had learned before. To all which may be added, that this was done not by the provincial governor, who had indeed power of executing capital punishments within his own province, (which seems to have been the main ground of Scaliger's scruple,) but immediately by the emperor himself, whose pleasure and command it was that he should be sent to Rome; whither we must now follow him to his martyrdom: in the account whereof we shall, for the main, keep to the acts of it, written, in all probability, by Philo and Agathopus, the companions of his journey, and present at his passion; two ancient versions whereof the incomparable Archbishop Usher first recovered and published to the world.

Being consigned to a guard of ten soldiers, he took his leave of his beloved Antioch, (and a sad parting no doubt there was between him and his people, who were to see his face no more,) and was conducted on foot to Seleucia, a port-town of Syria, about sixteen miles distant thence; the very place whence Paul and Barnabas set sail for Cyprus. Here, going aboard, after a tedious and difficult voyage, they arrived at Smyrna, a famous city of Ionia, where they were no

sooner set on shore, but he went to salute St. Polycarp, bishop of the place, his old fellow-pupil under St. John the Apostle. Joyful was the meeting of these two holy men: St. Polycarp, so far from being discouraged, rejoiced in the other's chains, and earnestly pressed him to a firm perseverance unto the end. Hither came in people from the country round about, especially the bishops, presbyters, and deacons of Asian churches, to behold so venerable a sight, to partake of the holy martyr's prayers and blessing, and to encourage him to hold on to his consummation. To requite whose kindness, and for their further instruction and establishment in the faith, he wrote letters from hence to several churches; one to the Ephesians, wherein he commends Onesimus their bishop for his singular charity; another to the Magnesians, a city seated upon the river Meander, which he sent by Damas their bishop, Bassus and Apollonius, presbyters, and Sotio, deacon of that church; a third to the Trallians, by Polybius their bishop, wherein he particularly presses them to subjection to their spiritual guides, and to avoid those pestilent heretical doctrines that were then risen in the church. A fourth he wrote to the Christians at Rome, to acquaint them with his present state, and passionate desire not to be hindered in that course of martyrdom which he was now hastening to accomplish.

His keepers, a little impatient of their stay at Smyrna, set sail for Troas, a noted city of the lesser Phrygia, not far from the ruins of the ancient Troy: where, at his arrival, he was not a little refreshed with the news that he received, of the persecution ceasing in the church of Antioch. Hither several churches sent their messengers to visit and salute him; and hence he despatched two epistles, one to the church of Philadelphia, to press them to love and unity, and to stand fast in the truth and simplicity of the gospel: the other to the church of Smyrna, from whence he lately departed, which he sent, as also the former, by Burrhus the deacon, whom they and the Ephesians had sent to wait upon him; and together with that, (as Eusebius informs us,) he wrote privately to St. Polycarp, particularly recommending to him the care and oversight of the church of Antioch, for which, as a vigilant pastor, he could not but have a tender and very dear regard; though very learned men, (but certainly without any just reason,) think this not to have been a distinct epistle from the former; but jointly directed and intended to St. Polycarp and his church of Smyrna. Which, however it be, they conclude it as certain that the epistle to St. Polycarp now extant, is none of it, as in which nothing of the true temper and spirit of Ignatius does appear; while others of great note not improbably contend for it as

genuine and sincere. From Troas they sailed to Neapolis, a maritime town of Macedonia, thence to Philippi, a Roman colony, (the very same journey which St. Paul had gone before him,¹) where, (as Polycarp intimates in his epistle to that church,) they were entertained with all imaginable kindness and courtesy, and conducted forwards in their journey. Hence they passed on foot through Macedonia and Epirus, till they came to Epidamnus, a city of Dalmatia; where again taking ship they sailed through the Adriatic, and arrived at Regium, a port town in Italy, whence they directed their course through the Tyrrhenian Sea to Puteoli; Ignatius desiring (if it might have been granted) thence to have gone by land, that he might have traced the same way by which St. Paul went to Rome. After a day and a night's stay at Puteoli, a prosperous wind quickly carried them to the Roman port, the great harbour and station for their navy, built near Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, about sixteen miles from Rome; whither the holy martyr longed to come, as much desirous to be at the end of his race, as his keepers, wary of their voyage, were to be at the end of their journey.

The Christians at Rome, daily expecting his arrival, were come out to meet and entertain him; and accordingly received him with

¹ Acts xvi. 11, 12.

equal joy and sorrow. Glad they were of the presence and company of so great and good a man; but quickly found their joy allayed with the remembrance, how soon, and by how severe a death he was to be taken from them: and when some of them did but intimate, that possibly the people might be taken off from desiring his death, he expressed a pious indignation, entreating them to cast no hindrances in his way, nor do anything that might retard him, now he was hastening to his crown. Being conducted to Rome he was presented to the præfect of the city; and, as it is probable, the emperor's letters concerning him were delivered. In the mean time, while things were preparing for his martyrdom, he and the brethren that resorted to him, improved their time to pious purposes; he prayed with them and for them; heartily recommended the state of the church to the care and protection of our blessed Saviour, and earnestly besought him to stop the persecution that was begun, and bless Christians with a true love and charity towards one another. That his punishment might be the more pompous and public, one of their solemn festivals was pitched on for his execution; at which time they were wont to entertain the people with the bloody conflicts of gladiators, and the hunting of, and fighting with wild beasts. Accordingly, on the 13th of the calends of January, that is,

December 20, he was brought out into the amphitheatre, and according to his own fervent desire, that he might have no other grave but the bellies of wild beasts, the lions were let loose upon him, whose roaring alarm he entertained with no other concernment, than that now, "as God's own corn, he should be ground between the teeth of these wild beasts, and become white bread for his heavenly Master." The lions were not long doing their work, but quickly despatched their meal, and left nothing but what they could not well devour, a few hard and solid bones. This throwing of persons to wild beasts was never used but for very capital offences, and towards the vilest and most despicable malefactors, in which class they ranked the Christians, who were so familiarly destined to this kind of death, (that, as Tertullian tells us,) upon any trifling and frivolous pretence, if a famine or an earthquake did but happen, the common outcry was, *Christianos ad leones*, "Away with the Christians to the lions."

Among other Christians that were mournful spectators of this tragic scene, were the deacons I mentioned, who had been the companions of his journey, who bore not the least part in the sorrows of that day. And that they might not return home with nothing but the account of so sad a story, they gathered up the bones which the wild beasts

had spared, and transported them to Antioch, where they were joyfully received, and honourably entombed in the cemetery, without the gate that leads to Daphnè,—a passage which Chrysostom, according to his rhetorical vein, elegantly amplifies as the great honour and treasure of that place. From hence, in the reign of Theodosius, they were, by his command, with great pomp and solemnity, removed within the city to a temple heretofore dedicated to the public genius of the city, but now consecrated to the memory of the martyr.

About this time, or a little before, while Trajan was yet at Antioch, he stopped, or at least mitigated the persecution against Christians; for having had an account from Pliny, the proconsul of Bithynia, (whom he had employed to that purpose,) concerning the innocency and simplicity of the Christians, that they were a harmless and inoffensive generation; and lately received a letter from Tiberianus, governor of Palestina Prima, wherein he told him, that he was wearied out in executing the laws against the Galileans, who crowded themselves in such multitudes to execution, that he could neither by persuasion nor threatenings keep them from owning themselves to be Christians, further praying his majesty's advice in that affair: hereupon he gave command that no inquisition should be made after the Christians, though if any of them offered themselves,

execution should be done upon them: so that the fire which had hitherto flamed and burned out, began now to be extinguished, and only crept up and down in private corners. There are that tell us, that Trajan having heard a full account of Ignatius and his sufferings, and how undauntedly he had undergone that bitter death, repented of what he had done, and was particularly moved to mitigate and relax the persecution: whereby (as Metaphrastes observes) not only Ignatius's life, but his death became the procurer of great peace and prosperity, and the glory and establishment of the Christian faith. Some not improbably conceive, that the severe judgments which happened not long after, might have a peculiar influence to dispose the emperor's mind to more tenderness and pity for the remainder of his life. For during his abode at Antioch, there were dreadful and unusual earthquakes, fatal to other places, but which fell most heavy upon Antioch, at that time full more than ordinary, with a vast army and confluence of people from all parts of the world. Among thousands that died, and far greater numbers that were maimed and wounded, Peto the consul lost his life; and Trajan himself, had he not escaped out at a window, had undergone the same fate: accidents which I doubt not prepared his mind to a more serious consideration and regard of things. Though these

calamities happened not till some years after Ignatius's death.

Whether these judgments were immediate instances of the Divine displeasure for the severity used against the Christians, and particularly for their cruelty to Ignatius, I will not say. Certain it is, that the Christian church had a mighty loss in so useful and excellent a person. For he was a good man, one in whose breast the true spirit of religion did eminently dwell; a man of very moderate and mortified affections, in which sense he doubtless intended that famous saying, so much celebrated by the ancients, "My love is crucified;" that is, (for to that purpose he explains it in the very words that follow,) his appetites and desires were crucified to the world, and all the lusts and pleasures of it. We may, with St. Chrysostom, consider him in a threefold capacity, as an apostle, a bishop, and a martyr. As an apostle (in the larger acceptation of the word, he being, as the Greek offices style him, "the immediate successor of the apostles,") he was careful to diffuse and propagate the genuine doctrine which he had received of the apostles, and took a kind of general care of all churches. Even in his passage to Rome he surveyed, (as Eusebius tells us,) the dioceses, or churches, that belonged to all the cities whither he came; confirming them by his sermons and exhortations, and directing

epistles to several of the principals for their further order and establishment in the faith. As a bishop, he was a diligent, faithful, and industrious pastor, infinitely careful of his charge; which though so exceedingly vast and numerous, he prudently instructed, governed, and superintended, and that in the midst of dangerous and troublesome times, above forty years together. He had a true and unchangeable love for his people; and when ravished from them in order to his martyrdom, there was not any church to whom he wrote, but he particularly begged their prayers to God for his church at Antioch; and of some of them desired that they would send a divine ambassador thither, on purpose to comfort them, and to congratulate their happy deliverance from the persecution. And because he knew that the prosperity of the church and the good of souls were no less undermined by heresy from within, than assaulted by violence and persecution from without, he had a peculiar eye to that, and took all occasions of warning the church to beware of heretics and seducers, those beasts in the shape of men, whose wild notions and evil manners began even then to debase religion, and corrupt the simplicity of the faith. Indeed, he duly filled up all the measures of a wise governor, and an excellent guide of souls: and St. Chrysostom runs through the particular characters of the bishop delineated

by St. Paul, and finds them all accomplished and made good in him ; with so generous a care, (says he,) so exact a diligence did he preside over the flock of Christ, even to the making good what our Lord describes, as the utmost pitch and line of episcopal fidelity, "to lay down his life for the sheep;" and this he did with all courage and fortitude ; which is the last consideration we shall remark concerning him.

As a *martyr* he gave the highest testimony to his fidelity, and to the truth of that religion which he both preached and practised. He gloried in his sufferings as his honour and his privilege, and looked upon chains as his jewels and his ornaments: he was raised above either the love or fear of the present state, and could with as much ease and freedom (says Chrysostom) lay down his life, as another man could put off his clothes. The truth is, his soul was strangely inflamed with a desire of martyrdom ; he wished every step of his journey to meet with the wild beasts that were prepared for him. And though the death he was to undergo was most savage and barbarous, and dressed up in the most horrid and frightful shapes, enough to startle the firmest resolution, yet could they make no impression (as the Greeks say of him,) upon his impregnable adamant mind, any more than the dashes of a wave upon a rock of marble. "Let the fire," said he, "and the

cross, and the assaults of wild beasts, the breaking of bones, cutting of limbs, battering the whole body in pieces, yea, and all the torments which the devil can invent, come upon me, so I may but attain to be with Jesus Christ;" professing he thought it much better to die for Christ, than to live and reign the sole monarch of the world. Expressions certainly of a mighty zeal, and a divine passion wound up to its highest note. And yet, after all, this excellent person was humble to the lowest step of abasement. He often professes that he looked upon himself as the least of the faithful in the whole church of Antioch; and though it was his utmost ambition, yet he did not know whether he was worthy to suffer for religion. I might in the last place enter into a discourse concerning his epistles; (the true indices of the piety and divine temper of his mind;) those seven, I mean, enumerated and quoted by Eusebius, and collected by St. Polycarp, as himself expressly testifies; but shall forbear, despairing to offer anything considerable after so much as has been said by learned men about them; only adding St. Polycarp's character of these epistles, whereby he recommends them as highly useful and advantageous; that "they contain in them instructions and exhortations to faith and patience, and whatever is necessary to build us up in the religion of our Lord and Saviour."

APPENDIX.

OF the Epistles of St. Ignatius before referred to, there are seven which have been proved by learned men to be undoubtedly genuine. They are as follows: to the Ephesians; to the Magnesians; to the Trallians; to the Romans; to the Philadelphians; to the Smyrneans; to St. Polycarp. These letters are so deeply interesting, and, as containing the testimony of one of the earliest saints and martyrs to the faith and practice of the Church, so valuable to us of the present day, that some specimens shall be here subjoined.

I.

Epistle of Ignatius, the Friend of St. Peter and St. John, and Bishop of Antioch, on the way to Martyrdom, to the Ephesians.

IGNATIUS, also called Theophorus, to her who is blessed in the greatness and fulness of God the Father; to the predestinate before all worlds to be ever in marvellous glory unchangeable, united, and elect through the true Passion, through the will of the FATHER and JESUS CHRIST our God; to the truly beatified Church, which is in Ephesus of Asia, all health in JESUS CHRIST and in unspotted grace.

I. I WELCOME in God's behalf that well-beloved name, which ye have attained in all righteousness, according to the Faith and Love which is in JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR, for that being followers of God, and kindling the inward flame by the blood of God, ye have perfectly accomplished the work that belonged to you, when ye heard that I came bound from Syria, for the

common name and hope ; trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome, that so by suffering I may become indeed the Disciple of Him "who gave Himself to God, an offering and Sacrifice for us." How many ye be, that be called by the name of God, I have heard from Onesimus, whose love is beyond all words, your Bishop according to the flesh ; whom I beseech you, by JESUS CHRIST, to love, and that ye would all be like unto him. And blessed be God, who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such a Bishop.

II. As to my fellow-servant Burrhus, who is your most blessed Deacon, in things pertaining to God, I pray that he may abide with you to the honour both of you and of your Bishop. And Crocus, also, worthy both of God and you, whom I have received as the sample of your love, has in all things refreshed me, as the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST shall also refresh him ; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euplus, and Fronto, in seeing whom I have seen the love of you all. And may I always have joy of you, if I be worthy of it ! It is therefore fitting that you should by all means glorify JESUS CHRIST, who hath glorified you : that by a uniform obedience, "Ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment ; and may all speak the same thing : " and that being subject to your Bishop, and his Presbytery, ye may be sanctified in all things.

III. These things I prescribe to you, not as if I were somebody : for though I am bound for His name, I am not yet perfect in CHRIST JESUS. But now I begin to learn, and I speak to you as Fellow-Disciples together with me. For I ought to have been stirred up by you in Faith, in Admonition, in Patience, in Long-suffering. But forasmuch as Charity suffers me not to be silent towards you, I have first taken upon me to exhort you, that ye would all concur in the mind of God. For JESUS CHRIST, our inseparable Life, is the Mind of the FATHER ; like as the Bishops appointed even unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are after the mind of JESUS CHRIST.

IV. Wherefore it will become you to concur in the mind of your Bishops, as also ye do. For your famous Presbytery, worthy of God, is knit as closely to its Bishop, as the strings to a harp. Therefore by your unanimity and harmonious love JESUS CHRIST is sung; and each of you taketh part in the chorus: that so, being attuned together in one mind, and taking up the song of God, ye may with one voice, and in a perfect unity, sing to the FATHER by JESUS CHRIST; to the end that by this means He may both hear you, and perceive by your works, that ye are indeed the members of His SON. Wherefore it is profitable for you to live in blameless unity, that so ye may always have fellowship with God.

V. For if I in this little time have held such communion with your Bishop, I mean not earthly, but spiritual; how much more must I think you blessed, who are so joined to him, as the Church is to JESUS CHRIST, and JESUS CHRIST to the FATHER; that so all things may agree in the same unity? Let no man deceive himself; if a man be not within the ALTAR, he faileth of the BREAD of GOD. For if the prayer of one or two be of such force, as we are told, how much more that of the Bishop and the whole Church? He, therefore, that does not come together into the same place with it, is proud, and has already condemned himself. For it is written, "God resisteth the proud." Let us take heed, therefore, that we do not set ourselves against the Bishop, that we may be set under God.

VI. And the more any seeth his Bishop keep silence, the more let him reverence him. For whomsoever the master of the house sendeth to his own household, we ought so to receive, as we would him that sent him. It is plain then that we ought to look to the Bishop, even as to the LORD himself. And truly Onesimus himself doth greatly commend your good order in GOD: in that ye all live according to the truth, and that no heresy dwelleth among you, but ye hearken to no man above JESUS CHRIST, speaking to you in truth.

VII. For some there are who carry about the name

of CHRIST in deceitfulness, and do many things unworthy of God; whom ye must flee, as ye would wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, which bite secretly; against whom ye must guard yourselves, as hardly to be cured. There is one Physician, both Fleshly and Spiritual; Begotten, not Made; God incarnate; true Life in Death; both of Mary and of God; first made subject to suffering, then liable to suffer no more.

VIII. Wherefore let no man deceive you; as indeed neither are ye deceived, being wholly the servants of God. For inasmuch as there is no contention nor strife among you, to trouble you, surely ye live according to God's Will. My soul be for yours; and I myself the expiatory offering for your church of Ephesus, so famous to all ages. They that are of the flesh cannot do the works of the Spirit; neither they that are of the Spirit the works of the flesh; as also faith cannot do the works of unfaithfulness; neither unfaithfulness the works of faith. But even those things which ye do according to the flesh are spiritual; forasmuch as ye do all things in JESUS CHRIST.

IX. Nevertheless I have heard of some who have gone to you, having perverse doctrine; whom ye did not suffer to sow among you; but stopped your ears, that ye might not receive those things that were sown by them: as being the stones of the temple of the FATHER, prepared for His building; and drawn up on high by the Cross of CHRIST, as by an engine; with the HOLY GHOST as the line by which to ascend: your faith being your support, and your charity the way that leads you up unto God. Ye therefore, with all the companions of your way, are full of God, of His spiritual temple, of CHRIST, of the Holy One: adorned in all things with the commands of CHRIST; through whom also I triumph, in that I have been thought worthy by this present Epistle to hold converse with you; and to joy together, that having regard to the other life, ye love nothing but God only.

X. Pray also without ceasing for all men; for there

is hope of repentance in them, that they may attain unto God. Suffer them therefore to learn from you, if only from your works. Against their raging, be ye mild; against their boasting, be ye lowly-minded; against their blasphemies, oppose your prayers; against their errors, be ye "steadfast in the faith;" against their cruelty, be ye gentle: not striving to imitate them again, let us be found their brethren in all kindness, but imitators of the LORD; if any one be more than other either injured, or defrauded, or despised; that so no plant of the devil be found in you, but ye may remain in all holiness and sobriety, both of body and spirit, in CHRIST JESUS.

XI. The last times are come upon us: let us therefore be very reverent, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it be not to us unto condemnation. For let us either fear the wrath that is to come, or be thankful for present grace; one of the two; only to be found in CHRIST JESUS, unto true life. Besides Him, let nothing be worthy of you; for whom also I bear about these bonds, those spiritual jewels in which I would to God, that through your prayers I might rise again; of which may I ever partake, that I may be found in the lot of the Christians of Ephesus, who have always agreed with the Apostles, through the power of JESUS CHRIST.

XII. I know both who I am, and to whom I write; I, a man condemned; ye, such as have obtained mercy: I, exposed to danger; ye, confirmed against danger. Ye are the hosts of those that are killed for God; the companions of Paul in the mysteries of the Gospel; the holy martyr, the truly blessed Paul; in whose footsteps may I be found, when I shall have attained unto God; who, throughout all his Epistle, makes mention of you in CHRIST JESUS.

XIII. Let it be your care therefore to come oftener together, to give thanks and glory to God. For when ye meet often together in the same place, the powers of the devil are destroyed, and his mischief is dissolved by the unity of your faith. And indeed, nothing is better

than peace; by which all war, both spiritual and earthly, is abolished.

XIV. Of all which nothing is hid from you, if ye have perfect faith and charity in JESUS CHRIST, which are the beginning and end of life: the beginning, faith; the end, charity. And these two joined together, are of God; and on them followeth all other goodness. No man, professing a true faith, goes wrong; neither does he who has charity, hate any. "The tree is made manifest by its fruit;" so they who profess themselves to be Christians, shall be known by what they do. For it is not now the time for profession, but for the power of faith, if a man be found faithful unto the end.

XV. It is better for a man to hold his peace, and be a Christian; than to say he is, and not to be. It is good to teach, if what he says, he does likewise. There is therefore one Master "who spake, and it was done;" and even those things which He did without speaking, are worthy of the Father. He that hath the word of JESUS, is truly able to hear His very silence, that he may be perfect; and both do according to what he speaks, and be known by those things in which he is silent. There is nothing hid from God, but even our secrets are nigh unto Him. Let us therefore do all things, as becomes those who have God dwelling in them; that we may be His temples, and He may be our God within us, as also He is, and will show Himself, before our faces, by those things for which we justly love Him.

XVI. Be not deceived, brethren; those that corrupt other, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If therefore they who do this according to the flesh, have suffered death; how much more shall he die, who by his wicked doctrine corrupts the faith of God, for which CHRIST was crucified? He that is thus defiled, shall depart into unquenchable fire, and so also shall he that hearkens unto him.

XVII. For this cause did the LORD suffer the ointment to be poured on His head; that He might

breathe the breath of immortality unto His church. Be not ye therefore anointed with the evil savour of the doctrine of the prince of this world; lest he lead you away captive from the life that is set before you. And why are we not all wise; seeing we have received the knowledge of GOD, which is JESUS CHRIST? Why do we suffer ourselves foolishly to perish; not considering the gift which the LORD has truly sent to us?

XVIII. My life be an offering for the doctrine of the Cross; which is indeed a stumbling-block to the unbelievers, but to us salvation and life eternal. "Where is the wise man? Where is the disputer?" Where is the boasting of those who are called wise? For JESUS CHRIST, our GOD, was, according to the dispensation of GOD, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the HOLY GHOST: was born and baptized, that through His passion He might purify water.

XIX. Now the virginity of Mary, and her delivery, was kept in secret from the prince of this world; as was also the death of our LORD; three most notable mysteries, yet done in secret by GOD. How then was our SAVIOUR manifested to the world? There shone a star in heaven above all other stars, and its light was unspeakable, and its strangeness wrought amazement. All the other stars, yea, the sun and moon also, were but its train; and it sent forth its light beyond them all. And there was trouble to think whence this unwonted strangeness might be. Hence all the power of magic was dissolved; and every bond of wickedness was destroyed; ignorance was taken away; the old kingdom was abolished; GOD Himself appearing in the form of a man, for the renewal of eternal life. Moreover the full dispensation of GOD then took its beginning. From thenceforth all things were disturbed; forasmuch as He designed to abolish death.

XX. But if JESUS CHRIST shall give me grace through your prayers, and it be His will, I purpose in a second Epistle, which I will shortly write unto you, to manifest to you more fully the dispensation, (of which I have now begun to speak,) unto the new man, which is

JESUS CHRIST; both in His faith, and in His love, in His suffering, and in His resurrection, especially if the **LORD** shall make it known unto me: that ye may all and each of you, by grace, concur in professing the name of one faith, and one **JESUS CHRIST**, who was of the race of David according to the flesh; the Son of man, and Son of God; that ye may obey your Bishop and the Presbytery with an entire affection; breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality; our antidote that we should not die, but live for ever in **CHRIST JESUS**.

XXI. My soul be for yours, and for theirs whom ye have sent to Smyrna, to the glory of God; from whence also I write to you; giving thanks unto the **LORD**, and loving Polycarp even as I do you. Remember me, as **JESUS CHRIST** doth remember you. Pray for the Church which is in Syria, from whence I am carried bound to Rome, being the least of all the faithful which are there; amongst whom I have been thought worthy to be found to the glory of God. Fare ye well in God the **FATHER**, and in **JESUS CHRIST**, our common hope. Amen.

II.

Epistle of Ignatius, the Friend of St. Peter, on his way to Martyrdom, to the Philadelphians.

IGNATIUS, which is also Theophorus, to the Church of **GOD** the **FATHER** and our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, that is in Philadelphia of Asia, that hath obtained mercy, and is established in God's concord, and exulteth continually in the Passion of our **LORD**; and hath in His resurrection been richly furnished with all mercy: whom I salute in the blood of **JESUS CHRIST**, who is our everlasting and abiding joy; especially if they be in one with the Bishop and his fellow Presbyters and Deacons, set forth after the mind of

JESUS CHRIST; whom He hath according to His own will established in steadfastness, by His **HOLY SPIRIT**.

I. **THIS** your Bishop, I know, hath obtained his public ministry not of himself, or by the means of men, neither out of vain-glory, but in the love of God the **FATHER** and our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**. At whose moderation I do greatly marvel; as he by silence doth more prevail, than others with their idle speeches; for he is exactly adjusted to the commandments, as a harp to its strings. Wherefore, my soul blesses his temper toward God, knowing it to be virtuous and perfect; as also his unmoved and serene temper, in all moderation of the living God.

II. Do ye then, being children of light and truth, flee division and corrupt doctrines; but where your shepherd is, thither follow ye as sheep. For there be many wolves, held worthy to be trusted, who take captive by corrupt pleasure those that are running a godly course; but in your unity they shall have no place.

III. Abstain from the evil herbage, that **CHRIST JESUS** dresseth not; forasmuch as they are not the **FATHER**'s planting. I say not this because I have found you divided, but rather select. For all that are of God and **JESUS CHRIST**, these are with the Bishop; and all that shall repent and turn to the unity of the Church, these also shall be of God, that they may live according to **JESUS CHRIST**. Be not deceived, my brethren; whosoever followeth one that createth schism, he inheriteth not the kingdom of God; whosoever walketh by another man's opinion, he assenteth not to the Passion.

IV. Be careful, therefore, to use one Eucharist; for there is but one flesh of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**; and one cup, for the uniting of His blood; one altar; also one Bishop, together with the Presbytery and Deacons, my fellow-servants; that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to God.

V. My brethren, I overflow in love toward you, and in my exceeding joy I fortify you; and yet not I, but JESUS CHRIST; for whom, though I am in bonds, I have therefore the more fear, inasmuch as I am not yet made perfect. But your prayer to God shall make me perfect; that I may obtain that portion in which I have found mercy; flying to the Gospel as the flesh of CHRIST; and to the Apostles as to the Presbytery of the Church. Let us love the Prophets also, for that they have announced the Gospel, that we should hope for Him and await Him; in whom they also believing were saved, being in the unity of JESUS CHRIST, holy men, worthy to be loved and had in wonder; who have received testimony from Jesus Christ, and have been reckoned together in the Gospel of our common hope.

VI. Now, should any one expound Judaism unto you, hearken not unto him; for it is better to hear Christianity from a man that hath circumcision, than Judaism from one that is uncircumcised. But if they neither speak concerning JESUS CHRIST, they are unto me but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, whereon is nothing written but the names of men. Flee, therefore, the evil arts and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time, being afflicted by his devices, ye grow weak in love; but join all of you together with an undivided heart. I thank my God that I enjoy a good conscience toward you; and that no one can make a vaunt either secretly or in public, that I have been burdensome to him in little or great; and I pray that to none among whom I have spoken, it may be for a testimony.

VII. For, though some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit is not deceived, being of God; for it knoweth whence it cometh and whither it goeth, and arraigneth the secrets. I cried out while I was among you, I spake with a loud voice; "Give heed to the Bishop, to the Presbytery, and the Deacons." Now, some suspected that I spake this as knowing beforehand division of some. But He is my witness, for whom I am in bonds, that I knew it not

from flesh of man ; but the Spirit proclaimed, saying, "Apart from the Bishop do nothing : keep your flesh as the temple of God ; love unity ; avoid divisions ; be ye followers of JESUS CHRIST, even as He is a follower of His FATHER."

VIII. Wherefore I did my part, as a man fitted to the preserving of unity. For where is division and wrath, there God dwelleth not. The LORD, therefore, forgiveth all, when they repent, if, in repenting, they turn to God's unity and the counsel of the Bishop. I trust in the grace of JESUS CHRIST, that He will loose you from every bond ; and I exhort you to do nothing with contention, but according to the lessons of CHRIST. And this I say, because I heard some affirm, that I have not faith in the Gospel, unless I find it written in the Records ; and when I told them, It is so written ; they answered, It is written. But my records are JESUS CHRIST. My inviolate records are His cross and death and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him ; in the which I desire to be justified through your prayer.

IX. The Priests indeed are good ; but far more excellent is the High-Priest, who hath received charge of the Holy of Holies ; who hath alone received charge of the hidden things of God. He is the door of the FATHER, through which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophets, and the Apostles, and the Church. All these things tend to godly unity ; but the Gospel hath an especial gift ; namely, the presence of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, His Passion and Resurrection. For the beloved Prophets brought tidings of Him ; but the Gospel is the fulfilment of immortality. All things are good together, if ye have faith with love.

X. Now, whereas, I am told that, according to your prayer, and the bowels ye have in CHRIST JESUS, the Church which is in Antioch, of Syria, is in peace, it is fitting for you, as a Church of God, to appoint a Deacon, to there exercise God's ambassage ; that so you may take part in their joy, when they are met together, and may glorify the name of God. Blessed in JESUS CHRIST is he, who shall be thought worthy of such a ministry ;

and ye also shall be glorified. Now, if ye be willing, it is not impossible to do this for the name of God: seeing that all the neighbouring Churches sent, some Bishops, some Priests and Deacons.

XI. Touching Philo, the Deacon from Cilicia, a man approved, who serveth me even now in the word of God, together with Rheus Agathopus, one of the elect, who followeth me from Syria, having taken leave of life, who also bear testimony unto you, I thank God for your sakes, that ye received them, even as the Lord will receive you. But for those who showed them dishonour, may they be redeemed through the grace of JESUS CHRIST. The love of the brethren who are in Troas salutes you; whence also I write unto you by the hand of Burrhus, who was sent with me by the Ephesians and Smyrneans for respect's sake. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST will honour them, on whom they hope in flesh, soul, faith, love, concord. Fare ye well in CHRIST JESUS, our common hope.

